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COMMITTEE ON THE PEACEFUL
USES OF OUTER SPACE

MATTERS RELATED TO THE POSSIBLE HOLDING OF A THIRD UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON THE EXPLORATION AND PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE

Report by the Secretariat

Addendum

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INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1. The General Assembly, in paragraph 20 of its resolution 47/67 of 14 December 1992, recommended that the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space at its 1993 session begin discussions on the possibility of holding a third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE).

2. Pursuant to this recommendation and the request of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee at its thirtieth session in 1993, the Committee at its 1993 session considered in general terms the question of holding such a conference, including the goals and objectives for the proposed conference, as well as matters related to organization, venue, timing and funding implications. Having considered the matter, the Committee requested the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee to further discuss the subject at its thirty-first session in 1994, with a view to promoting an early conclusion on the matter by the Committee.

3. The General Assembly, in paragraphs 22 and 23 of its resolution 48/39, requested the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee to continue its discussions on the matter and agreed that the Committee and the Subcommittee should define a set of sharply focused objectives for such a conference, including details such as organization, venue, timing and funding, with a view to promoting an early conclusion on the matter by the Committee. Paragraph 24 in the same resolution noted that the goals set for such a conference might be achieved through other means, including intensification of work within the Committee.

4. Pursuant to this resolution, the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee at its thirty-first session in 1994, continued its discussions of the possibility of holding a third UNISPACE conference. Working papers on various matters related to the holding of such a conference were submitted by Pakistan (A/AC.105/C.1/L.191), India (A/AC.105/C.1/L.195) and by the Group of 77 (A/AC.105/C.1/L.199). The latter represented an amalgamation and expansion of the views contained in the Indian and Pakistani papers. These working papers have been translated into all languages and circulated to Member States of the Committee. At this session the Government of India reiterated its offer, originally made at the thirty-sixth session of the Committee in 1993, to host a third UNISPACE conference at its Space Centre in Bangalore.

5. The Subcommittee, in paragraph 112 of its report (A/AC.105/571), agreed that the Committee should further consider the ideas and proposals contained in these working papers as well as any others which may be submitted at a later date. To further discussion on this matter within the Committee, the Subcommittee, in paragraph 113 of its report, requested the Secretariat to prepare, in time for the next session of the Committee, a comprehensive report on the likely organization, funding and logistical implications of holding such a conference. The report should include an analysis of the Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE 82), held in Vienna, Austria, in August 1982, including its organization, funding and logistics, as well as an analysis of various combinations of duration, scope and venue (including United Nations headquarters cities and other sites) for a third UNISPACE conference.

6. In accordance with that request, the Secretariat submitted a report to the Committee at its thirty-seventh session in June 1994 (A/AC.105/575). At that session, the Committee continued its discussions of matters related to the holding of a third UNISPACE conference and, on the basis of those discussions, agreed that a third UNISPACE conference could be convened in the near future, and that prior to recommending a date for such a conference, there should be a consensus recommendation on its agenda, venue and funding.

7. After taking into consideration the various working papers submitted to previous sessions of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee (see paragraph 4 above), the report by the Secretariat (A/AC.105/575) mentioned above, as well as the informal papers circulated at its thirty-seventh (1994) session, the Committee agreed that the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, at its next session in 1995, should discuss a broad

range of themes and subjects that could be refined into a sharply focused and detailed agenda for a third UNISPACE conference and, at the same time, should continue its examination of other means of achieving the goals set for such a conference.

8. To facilitate further consideration of this matter, the Committee requested the Secretariat to compile a document, in time for consideration at the next session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, containing the various ideas regarding the agenda and organization of a third UNISPACE conference submitted to the Committee.

I. SCOPE OF THE PRESENT REPORT

9. The present report therefore contains the following: (a) the modified text of a paper by the Chairman of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, originally circulated at the thirty-seventh session of the Committee as document A/AC.105/1994/CRP.5; and (b) a summary of the developments related to the convening of a third UNISPACE conference that occurred at the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly in November 1994. Additional ideas regarding a third UNISPACE conference that have been submitted by Member States and international organizations are contained in the annex to the present report.

10. Together with the working papers referred to in paragraph 4 above, the ideas contained in the present report, along with any others that may be submitted at future sessions of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies, may form the basis for the continued discussion on matters related to the holding of a third UNISPACE conference in these bodies.

II. POSSIBLE AGENDA OF A THIRD UNISPACE CONFERENCE

11. The following is the modified text of a paper by the Chairman of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space that was circulated in its original form as document A/AC.105.1994/CRP.5, at the thirty-seventh session of the Committee. The document was drafted taking into account the views expressed by Member States as well as those contained in the working papers that had been circulated in the Committee and the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee. It has been modified for the present report to reflect the various views expressed by Member States and concerned international organizations.

Possible provisional agenda for a third UNISPACE conference

Committee I: State of space science, technology and research

A. Evaluation of major developments in space science, technology and applications, and assessment of their utility for future economic and social development.

B. The future of planetary exploration and possibilities for international cooperation.

C. International cooperation in the design, development and use of micro-satellites for space research.

D. International cooperation in space- and ground-based astronomy.

E. The use of microwave systems for geophysical studies and oceanographic research.

F. Review of technical issues related to space debris, ensuring the safety of future space activities and the establishment of cooperative space monitoring and tracking systems.

G. Development of joint projects in the fields of space science, applications and exploration among scientists from the developing and developed countries.

Committee II: Applications of space science and technology for sustainable development*

A. Environmental applications

1. Examining ways of improving space-based monitoring of the state of the global environment and improving dissemination and exchange of Earth observation data.

2. Improving international cooperation in development, and implementation of satellite-based disaster warning systems and utilization of space technology for disaster mitigation and relief.

3. Enhancing cooperation in the collection and dissemination of meteorological data from satellites and other sources.

B. Space technology for development applications

1. Remote sensing:

(a) Improving capabilities for the reception, processing and utilization of remote sensing data for sustainable natural resource development and management;

(b) Improving distribution systems to ensure availability of remote sensing data, especially to developing countries, and ensuring the complementarity of remote sensing data.

2. Navigation:

(a) Improving methods to ensure continuity in the availability of satellite-based position-location/navigational services and exploring the possibility of cooperative global navigational satellite systems;

(b) Enhancing international cooperation in satellite-based search-and-rescue systems, including development of common standards for ship and aircraft locator beacons.

3. Communications:

(a) Promoting regional cooperation in the planning, design, operation and utilization of satellite communication and broadcasting systems;

(b) Examining the uses of mobile satellite communications and other new technologies, including low-cost, lightweight satellites in non-geostationary orbits (lightsats), for rural communications;

(c) Concerning the use of satellite-based systems for tele-education, tele-medicine and similar programmes;

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*Working groups may be established to consider related items within Committee II.

(d) Examination of issues related to transnational satellite direct broadcasting, including protection of intellectual property rights;

4. Secondary applications of space technology:

(a) Potential uses of space for manufacturing specialized/unique products and materials;

(b) Industrial applications of spin-offs from space technologies.

Committee III: Enhancing international cooperation in the utilization of space technology and applications

A. Review of existing mechanisms to augment the scientific and technical capabilities of developing countries, particularly those for education and training, so they may participate in and benefit from space activities.

B. Examination of mechanisms to integrate space technology and applications into international programmes to promote environmental protection and economic development.

C. Review of existing mechanisms for international cooperation in space activities, consideration of ways and means for enhancing cooperation among Member States, the United Nations, its specialized agencies and other international organizations, with particular emphasis on the United Nations Programme on Space Applications.

D. Review of existing global and regional funding sources available for cooperative space applications programmes and development of strategies for utilizing those sources.

E. Examination of the role of space technology in promoting international peace and security, including the development of confidence-building measures for space activities and the conversion of military space technology for civilian purposes.

F. Review of the current status and the need for continued progressive development and codification of the law of outer space, including ways and means of promoting wider adherence to international space treaties, establishment of guidelines for international cooperation in space exploration and utilization, and examination of links between space law and other branches of international law, such as environmental law.

Additional scientific and technical component of a third UNISPACE conference

In order to ensure adequate discussion of scientific and technical issues, particularly as they relate to the items on the agendas of Committee I and Committee II, it is proposed that, in addition to the regular Committee sessions, there be an additional scientific and technical component in the form of the following:

Poster sessions: A series of scientific poster sessions should be held at the conference facility and be open to participants and observers throughout the Conference. The posters/papers will highlight the results from ongoing scientific and technical space projects and will be presented by national space agencies and international scientific organizations;

Public evening lectures: To be given by eminent scientists in various space-related scientific disciplines on subjects of broad interest to conference participants and the general public;

Workshops/Seminars: To be held as part of the conference and to be organized by interested specialized agencies of the United Nations and other international organizations on topics relevant to their expertise and mandates. For example: communications (International Telecommunication Union), remote sensing (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations/United Nations Environment Programme), navigation (International Civil Aviation Organization/International Maritime Organization), meteorology (World Meteorological Organization), basic space science (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization/Committee on Space Research/International Astronautical Federation), astronomy (International Astronomical Union).

III. DEVELOPMENTS AT THE FORTY-NINTH SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

12. In the context of its consideration of the General Assembly agenda items on outer space, from 7 to 11 November 1994, the Special Political and Decolonization Committee of the General Assembly discussed matters related to the convening of a third UNISPACE conference.

13. On the basis of a draft resolution submitted by the Special Political and Decolonization Committee, the General Assembly adopted resolution 49/34 of 9 December 1994. The resolution stated that the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space could be convened in the near future and that, prior to recommending a date for the conference, there should be a consensus recommendation on the agenda, venue and funding of the conference. The General Assembly further recommended that the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, at its thirty-second session, conduct a thorough analysis and define an agenda for such a conference, and agreed that the Subcommittee should discuss a broad range of themes and subjects that could be refined into a sharply focused and detailed agenda and should also continue its examination of other means of achieving the goals set for such a conference. These discussions should provide the basis for a prompt decision by the Committee on a recommendation to the General Assembly regarding the agenda, timing, funding and organization of the conference.

Annex

ADDITIONAL IDEAS REGARDING A THIRD UNISPACE CONFERENCE SUBMITTED BY MEMBER STATES AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Sweden

1. In the context of its statement to the Special Political and Decolonization Committee of 9 November 1994, Sweden proposed that the following issues be among those considered at a third UNISPACE conference:

(a) Space applications to promote sustainable development, in particular the implementation of Agenda 21 of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED);[a]

(b) Space applications to prevent and mitigate natural disasters;

(c) The role of space applications for international peace and security, including the conversions of space technology to civilian purposes;

(d) The United Nations and space applications.

Chile

2. An unsymbolized paper by Chile on a third UNISPACE conference was informally circulated at the last meeting of the thirty-seventh (1994) session of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. In the paper it was noted that such a conference:

(a) Would provide States Members of the United Nations that are not members of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space an opportunity to participate in discussions on the utilization and benefits of space technology;

(b) Would be a valuable forum for increasing awareness among the general public regarding the benefits that can be derived from space technology, particularly the potential economic benefits, thereby building support for national and international space activities;

(c) Should, among other things, focus on Agenda 21 of UNCED and provide a plan of action for international cooperative sustainable development programmes.

United Nations Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities

3. The ongoing preparatory discussions for a third UNISPACE conference were considered by participants in the annual Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities, held at the United Nations Office at Vienna from 3 to 5 October 1994. In this context, the Meeting made the following observations (A/AC.105/582, paras. 27-31):

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[a] Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigenda), vol. 1: Resolutions Adopted by the Conference, resolution 1, annex II.

(a) The agenda of the conference should not be overly technical and therefore an effort should be made to incorporate more policy-oriented elements into its agenda;

(b) The agenda of the conference should contain bold and innovative ideas that could be considered in the framework of analysis of contemporary issues of significance to space technology and applications, including geopolitical changes that have occurred since the UNISPACE 82 conference;

(c) The Inter-Agency Meeting could play a role in coordinating inter-agency preparations for the third UNISPACE conference.

World Meteorological Organization

4. Following the Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities, the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), submitted the following observations and recommendations:

(a) Technical seminars/workshops should be an integral part of the conference;

(b) More emphasis should be placed on agenda items dealing with education;

(c) The agenda should stress regional, as well as international cooperation.